

BIRMINGHAM NEWS (AL)  
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# Raid organizer hinted CIA OK, Black jury told

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NEW ORLEANS — An admitted member of a mercenary band allegedly seeking to overthrow the government of Dominica says he was under the impression the U.S. government might be sanctioning the plot.

Michael Perdue, organizer of the band, "didn't actually come out and say it, but he put the seed of suspicion in my mind that possibly the CIA (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency) might have been involved in this," Christopher Anderson testified Wednesday.

Anderson, 41, of Oklahoma City, and six other men have pleaded guilty to a single federal charge in connection with the alleged coup attempt.

Don Black, 27, of Birmingham, Michael Stanley Norris, 21, of Tuscaloosa, and Joe Daniel Hawkins, 37, of Smith County, Miss., refused to plead guilty and are standing trial on seven federal charges resulting from their arrest as part of the alleged raiding party.

All 10 men were arrested near New Orleans and later were indicted by a federal grand jury.

THE GOVERNMENT claims that at the time of their arrest the 10 were about to board a boat for Dominica to initiate the takeover of the govern-

ment of Prime Minister Eugenia Charles.

The group planned to reinstall deposed Prime Minister Patrick John, according to the indictments.

The men were charged with conspiracy to break the law, plotting the invasion of a country friendly to the United States, and five violations of federal firearms and explosives laws.

Anderson testified Wednesday that Perdue, who pleaded guilty in the case and testified Tuesday against Black, Norris and Hawkins, never actually said the operation was sanctioned by any U.S. agency.

"But he (Perdue) did say he had a friend in the (U.S.) State Department in New Orleans," Anderson testified Wednesday.

ANDERSON SAID during the third day of the trial that he first met Perdue when in February he answered an advertisement in *Le Mercenaire*, a newsletter for soldiers of fortune.

He said Perdue flew him to Houston to discuss the operation.

"He told me we were going to overthrow the government of Dominica," a small Caribbean island of 80,000 blacks, said Anderson.

He quoted Perdue as saying that "I would like to have a bloodless coup, but who knows what could happen?"

Anderson said Perdue told him at

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one time that if they encountered any policemen, "he would take care of them."

That comment was made as the group was headed for New Orleans and he knew then the operation must be illegal, Anderson testified.

"But it was kind of late then" to back out, he testified.

BLACK HAS maintained that he joined the group primarily to fight communism in the Caribbean and that he did not know the group's mission violated U.S. law.

John Osburg, a special agent with the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, testified that on the night of April 27, he not only saw a number of firearms being loaded into a van, but saw Black carrying a shotgun to the vehicle.

Osburg said he went undercover to meet with Perdue after Michael Howell, captain of a 52-foot boat, contacted federal agents.

Howell testified Wednesday that Perdue had asked him to take the mercenary band to Dominica and told him the group was going to "stage a coup."

DURING OSBURG'S testimony about guns, explosives and other items allegedly seized when the men were arrested, he held up a Confederate flag and a Nazi swastika flag he said were found among the men's personal belongings.

Osburg said he did not know to whom the flags belonged.

In all, seven of the men arrested have current or past connections to the Ku Klux Klan or neo-Nazi groups, according to published reports.

Black still is national head of the Knights faction of the KKK and Nor-

ris and Hawkins reportedly once were Klan members.

OSBURG TESTIFIED that he posed as a crewman on Howell's boat, met with Perdue, Howell and Walter Wolfgang Droege on several occasions to discuss the alleged coup attempt.

Osburg said Droege, who also was arrested on April 27, told him the group planned to build a cocaine manufacturing plant on Dominica.

Osburg testified that Perdue told him the mercenaries' mission was "to supply men and equipment to the (Dominica) army and the local people and to assist them in a coup."

He said Perdue told him that when they were at sea, headed for Dominica, "if we were approached by a U.S. Coast Guard vessel we were to immediately dump all guns, ammunition and military equipment overboard."

HE SAID LOCAL people in Dominica "were going to back Mr. Perdue. Mr. Perdue and his men were going to take over certain (government) facilities before daylight and then quietly slip into the wilderness, so that it would appear that Patrick John and his supporters had taken control themselves."

That contradicts Black's claims in his opening statement Tuesday that the mercenary group was to serve only as advisers to the local army and John's supporters and actively assist in the coup only if necessary.

On Wednesday morning, U.S. District Judge Lansing L. Mitchell ordered defendants, attorneys and witnesses in the case not to talk with reporters.

The prosecution was expected to rest its case today.